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DEFENCE

OF THE

Lord Bishop of *St. Davids*.

IN ANSWER to

JONATHAN JONES, Esq;

*Seest thou a Man wise in his own conceit? there is more
more hope of a Fool than of him.*

PROV. xxvi. 12.



LONDON:

Printed and sold by T. WARNER at the *Black Boy*
in *Pater-noster-Row*. 1729. [Price Six Pence.]

DEFENCE

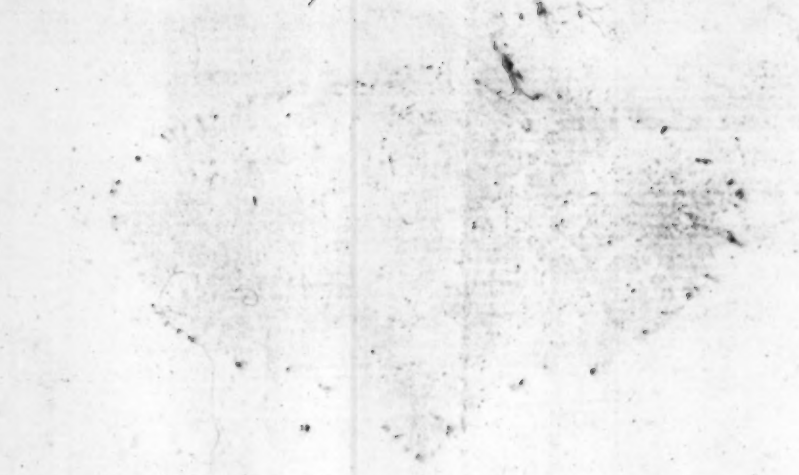
OF THE

Lord of the Manor



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A
DEFENCE
OF THE
Lord Bishop of *St. Davids.*



HERE goes a Pamphlet abroad, just published, intituled, *Instructions to the Right Reverend, Richard Lord Bishop of St. Davids, in defence of Religious Liberty; by Jonathan Jones Esq;*

The Conceitedness of the title in some measure shews the man, and what we may expect from him. This Gentleman, it seems, thinks himself qualified to be a publick Instructor, and to prescribe to our Prelates. It is not meerly Liberty of *Private Judgement*, that

the Fraternity are contending for, but Liberty of setting up as Apostles of Infidelity, in opposition to the Christian Guides, and to draw away People from paying any respect or deference to *Conscience*, and his Religion. He begins with telling the World, that this excel-

lent Prelate has published a Defence of Christianity, begun and carried on with a *professed Defence of Persecution*. But where has this Gentleman learn'd that the punishing of Blasphemy and Prophaneness, or the executing the Laws against Irreligion and Immorality, is *Persecution*? We have heard of Persecution for Religion, for Conscience, for Truth: But what means Persecution for No-religion, No Conscience, No Truth? It is *Prosecution* certainly that He means; only he has not been used to speak with the exactness of Divines. I pass over a page and a half which are meer impertinence, and of no significancy at all, but to shew how full the Writer is of himself. He talks magisterially about the Bishop's Style, as if he were a judge of it; looks down with contempt and commiseration upon his Lordship; and with an air of Superiority professes himself heartily willing to set him right; with more such pert, puerile Insultings, quite out of character and decency; that one would take him for

for some young Declaimer of the Sect, just lifted into the service, full of fire and mettle, and wanting the Sedateness and Caution of the older, and graver Infidels. *He would not offer this worthy Prelate his humble advice, he says, without his ablest reasons, and therefore, &c.* * What a favour is it to have his advice, unasked, and his ablest reasons too: it is mighty obliging, and very condescending in him, thus to teach his Betters. His able Reasons now follow in their order.

I.

THE first runs thus: † *He (the Bishop) calls aloud upon the Royal authority to draw the Sword of Vengeance, when he ought to remember, that Prayers and Tears are the only weapons of the Church.* Could any thing be more impertinent, or captious, than this paragraph? The Bishop did remember that *Prayers and Tears* were the only weapons of the Church; and therefore it was that He called for the weapons of the State, in a matter belonging to their cognizance. But this author, perhaps has blabbed out his wishes and expectations too soon, in supposing Us reduced to the last Refuge of *Prayers and Tears*, while there are

* Pag. 7.

† Ibid.

Courts of Justice to support Religion and Virtue, and to punish Offenders against either.

II.

HE (the Bishop) *would have that Religion to be maintain'd by fire and sword, which His Great Master meant to establish in Meekness and Truth.*† His Great Master and ours, undoubtedly, never meant to make Converts by Fire and Sword, nor to force Belief upon Infidels: But He meant to leave the Ruling Powers of every State in the same condition as He found them; *to be a terrour to Evil-doers, and to execute wrath upon them that do Evil.** For the purpose, to correct those that needlessly and causelessly disturb the Publick tranquility, to restrain those that libel the Established Religion, without offering any better, or any equivalent; to curb the insolence, and humble the pride of such as fly in the face of Authority, and pretend, without Commission or Qualifications, to instruct, and, under that colour, to insult their Superiors. These and the like Misdemeanours, arising from pride, and vanity, and a turbulent spirit, it concerns the Magistrates to take cognizance of, and to punish as the Laws direct.

† Pag. 7.

* Rom. xiii. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 14.

III.

HE (the Bishop) *implores the vengeance of the Secular arm in the cause of that God, who himself has said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay.** And where can the Magistrate execute vengeance better, than in the cause of that God who gave him commission so to do, and who looks upon it as his vengeance when executed under him, and for him, by his Vicegerents. True, the text says, *avenge not yourselves*: Neither does the Magistrate, in executing wrath, *avenge himself*, but the *Publick*, which would otherwise suffer from unruly and turbulent men: And it was never thought or imagined by any sober and intelligent man, except this forward Instructor, that God had so confined all vengeance to Himself, that he admitted no Deputies to act under Him.

IV.

And because his Lordship justly thought their Majesties had too much Discernment and true Religion, to persecute (leg. prosecute) men for God's sake, therefore He implores the Royal power to do this execution for his own sake.† How free with

* Pag. 7.

† Pag. 8.

his Lordship and their Majesties too ! and perfectly well qualified to judge of their *Discernment*: Tho' it may look a little too familiar towards their Majesties, to measure their Discernment by his own, and to put Nonsense and Impertinence upon Sacred Royalty. I see nothing in the suggestion here against the Bishop, but dull malice, like the rest. No doubt but his Lordship would have men, so obnoxious to the Law, prosecuted and punished according to Law, for the Glory of God, the Honour and Welfare of his Majesty's Person and Government, and the Good of the whole Kingdom. Libelling Religion in such a way, as has been lately practised, if suffered to go on with impunity, may leave Us neither Religion, nor Morals, nor Strength, nor any thing but the most deplorable confusion.

V.

* His Lordship represents, that Government cannot subsist if Religion be taken away, because of the Divine restraint upon Human Hearts, which He thinks are expected in vain from Laws and Motives merely Political.——His Lordship then should inform Us how Government subsisted

for the first four thousand Years of the World, when only the Jewish Nation had Divine restraints, and all the People of the Earth besides obeyed the Higher powers from Laws and Motives meerly Political.—— If He should reply, They had Restraints upon them which they received as Divine, his Lordship will then equally advance Imposture and Superstition with True and Rational religion; from whence it will follow, That the Worship of False gods is of the same advantage to the Higher powers as the Religion of Jesus Christ. * Here observe, that this Author directly asserts, that all the People of the Earth, (Jews excepted) obeyed the Higher powers from Laws and Motives meerly Political. This is thoughtlessly said of Him, and more than he had need to have said; only he has unawares discovered his principles, and shewn that his Scheme is Atheism. A Deist would have said that the Rest of the World obeyed the Higher powers from Laws and Motives of Natural religion, which might seem a tolerable answer to the Bishop's argument for Positive. But this Gentleman says roundly, That they obeyed upon Motives meerly political; which tho' intirely false, yet represents truly this Author's Scheme, Atheism direct: For whoever believes a God, and a Providence (which stand or fall together) does

* Pag. 8.

not obey meerly upon *Political* motives. The Heathens, generally, did believe in one supreme God, and in a Future state of Eternal rewards and punishments, had a sense of the Law of Nature, and Remains of ancient Tradition, and some Conscience; and so by the strength of those Principles, tho' mixed with much Superstition, Government was kept up and preserved in the Heathen world; and not by Motives or Laws meerly political. *Affyrians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans*, all had their respective Religions, and all equally abhorred Irreligion. The Story of *Diagoras* and his Prosecution for Atheism will set this matter in a clear light, I shall relate it in the words of the late learned Dean *Prideaux* *.

“ About this time, happened at Athens
 “ the Condemnation of *Diagoras* the Melian.
 “ He having settled in that city, and there
 “ taught Atheism, the Athenians prosecuted
 “ him for it. But by flying out of that
 “ Country, He escaped the punishment of
 “ death, which was intended for him, altho’
 “ not the Sentence. For the Athenians hav-
 “ ing in his Absence condemned him for his
 “ Impious doctrine, did set a price upon his
 “ Head, and decreed the reward of a Talent
 “ to whosoever should kill him, wheresoever
 “ He should be found. And about twenty

* Connect. Vol. I. p. 323.

“ years

“ years before, they had proceeded against
 “ *Protagoras*, another Philosopher, with the
 “ like severity, for only doubting of the
 “ Being of a God. For, in the beginning
 “ of one of his Books, He having written
 “ thus, *Of the Gods I know nothing, neither*
 “ *that they are, nor that they are not, for*
 “ *there are many things that hinder; the blind-*
 “ *ness of our Understanding, and the shortness*
 “ *of Human life.* The Athenians would not
 “ endure so much as the raising a doubt
 “ about this matter, but calling in all his
 “ books by the Common-cryers of the City,
 “ they caused them all publickly to be burnt
 “ with infamy, and banished the Author out
 “ of their territories for ever. Both these
 “ had been the Scholars of *Democritus* the first
 “ founder of the Atomical Philosophy, which
 “ is indeed wholly an Atheistical Scheme. For
 “ tho’ it allows the Being of a God in name,
 “ it takes it away in effect. For by denying
 “ the Power of God to create the World,
 “ and the Providence of God to govern the
 “ World, and the Justice of God to judge
 “ the World, they do the same in effect as
 “ if they had denied his Being. But this
 “ they durst not openly do even among the
 “ Heathens for fear of punishment; the
 “ greater shame is it to Us, who in a Christian
 “ State permit so many impious wretches to
 “ do this amongst Us, with a free Liberty

“and absolute Impunity.” Thus far Dr. Prideaux.

Let the Reader judge from hence whether the Heathen nations went upon Motives merely political. The true ground of condemning both *Protagoras* and *Diagoras* was their dissolving all Ties of Piety and Conscience, by denying, or doubting of, the Being of a God, and endeavouring to poison the minds of the People with such their Atheistical Scheme, or Schemes. *Cicero* in a few words may be understood to speak the sense of all the wiser part of the Heathen World. If we take away Religion towards the Gods, I question whether Mutual trust, and Human society, and that most excellent virtue, Justice, will not likewise be destroyed. † Speaking a little above of Religion and Sanctity, He says, If we lose these, the Consequence will be, Disquiet in life and great Confusion. *

But this we are told is equally advancing Imposture and Superstition, with True and Rational religion. ‖ It is indeed saying, that such

† Atque haud scio an pietate adversus Deos sublata, Fides etiam, & Societas humani generis, & una excellentissima virtus, Justitia, tollatur.

Cicer. de Nat. Deor. lib. I. c. 4.

* Quibus sublati perturbatio vitæ sequitur, & magna confusio. *Ibid.*

‖ Pag. 8.

mixt,

mixt, imperfect Religion, is better than none, is preferable to our Author's No-religion, or Atheism. It was useful to preserve Government *as well* as the Christian religion is, but not *so much* as the Christian religion is, which is sufficient to take off this Author's childish playing upon the word *equally*. It was of advantage to the Higher powers, but not of *so great* advantage: Because no Religion whatsoever is so pure, or so peaceable as the Religion of Christ, or so well fitted to preserve a constant and conscientious Obedience to the Higher powers.

VI.

His Lordship would have the King, his Sovereign, cease to be Father of his People, that He may become Defender of the Faith. No sure! But he desires, his Majesty may ever continue Defender of the Faith, that so He may ever continue a true Father of his People. But He goes on—And implores Him to renounce that protection, which is equally due to the Subject, &c. Cross purposes again. His Lordship only begs that His Majesty may protect his best and most religious Subjects, by curbing and punishing some of the worst. I shall give the picture of Infidels and Infidelity, in the words of the excellent Dr. I. Barrow †.*

* Pag. 9.

† Barrow's *Serm.* Vol. II. on *Infidelity*, p. 10.

“ The Naughtiness of Infidelity will appear
 “ by considering its effects and consequences,
 “ which are plainly a spawn of all Vices and
 “ Villanies, a deluge of all mischiefs and
 “ outrages upon the Earth. Our Faith being
 “ removed, together with it all *Conscience* go-
 “ eth, no virtue can remain : all Sobriety of
 “ Mind, all Justice in Dealing, all Security
 “ in Conversation are packed away. Nothing
 “ resteth to encourage Men to any Good, or
 “ restrain them from any Evil ; all Hopes of
 “ reward from God, all fears of punishment
 “ from him being discarded. No principle
 “ or rule of practice is left, besides brutish
 “ Sensuality, fond Self-love, Private interest,
 “ in their highest pitch, without any bound
 “ or curb ; which therefore will dispose Men
 “ to do nothing but to prey upon each other,
 “ with all cruel violence and base treachery.
 “ Every Man thence will be a God to him-
 “ self, a Fiend to each other ; so that ne-
 “ cessarily the World will thence be turned
 “ into a Chaos and a Hell, full of Iniquity
 “ and Impurity, of Spirit and Rage, of Mi-
 “ sery and Torment.”

The Instructor adds :---*This He* (the Bishop)
desires, to the end that His Majesty may perse-
cute incredulous Men, and force them, against
*their consent, to become Orthodox Believers.** Nor

one word of Truth. What is desired is, that petulant, blaspheming, Libellers may be prosecuted according to Law; may be forced, against their will, to become modest, quiet, inoffensive, and may no longer fly in the face of the Establishment, and defy all Laws sacred, and civil.

VII.

*His Lordship represents the King's title to the Crown as founded on the Profession of Christianity, when he knows that it proceeded from Principles of Liberty, and has himself sworn, by the Oath of Supremacy, that the King is entirely independent on the Church. * The Laws of the Land ||, I think, require, " That whosoever " shall succeed to the Crown of Great Bri- " tain shall join in Communion with the " Established Church of England."* From whence, I suppose, the Bishop infers, and very justly, that His Majesty's title is, in part, founded on the Profession of Christianity; because He conceives that a man cannot profess the *Protestant* Established Religion, but he must at the same time profess the *Christian*. I see no flaw in this Reasoning (of the Bishop), but this Author says, † *It proceeded from the Principles of Liberty*. And what if

* Pag. 9.

|| Annæ 4^{to}

† Pag. 10.

it did proceed from the Principles of Liberty? Was there therefore any Liberty left to profess another Religion, or to profess none? The Legislature undoubtedly considered how necessary it would be to the Happiness of these Nations, and the Security also of the Crown, that Prince and People should profess the same Faith, and join in the same Worship, as by Law established, and by Custom confirmed. And Common sense must tell Us, that a Prince of no Religion, (as this Writer would have) a Professed Favourer of Atheism or Infidelity, at the Head of a *Religious* People, would be as great an absurdity and incongruity, as a *Popish* Prince over a *Protestant* Kingdom. The Christian Religion, as professed by our Church, provides best, both for the support of the Crown, and Liberty of the Subject; and so upon the principles of Liberty, were there nothing else, Irreligion, as leading to the most abject Slavery both of Prince and People, ought to be excluded. But the *Bishop* * *has himself sworn, that the King is entirely independent of the Church*; is supreme Moderator and Governour, He means: And what has this to do with the point in debate? The King is not the less Supreme in this Church for professing to join in Communion with it. For I suppose, his deserting the Church or pro-

refusing to join with none, would not make him more the Head of the Church than before, or at all advance his Ecclesiastical Supremacy.

VIII.

His Lordship poorly answers the popular Clamour, that they who implore the Secular arm against Infidels are Friends of Persecution.† I never heard before of any such popular Clamour: There is a groundless, idle Clamour of that kind, raised by an handful of Men, in comparison, whom the most and best of the People abhor, and detest. Some few perverse, conceited Men would have a just Prosecution for Irreligion, Blasphemy, and Turbulency, called *Persecution*; and they are singular in it: This is all I know of a Popular clamour. But let Us hear this Writer in what follows. *His Lordship says, there is a real difference between Argument and Buffoonery.* His Lordship is much in the right; as also that *Licentious invectives against the Founders of our Religion, and the Miracles which confirm the Truth of it, are no part of the Liberties of a Christian Nation.* His Lordship's Observation is a very just one, and unquestionably true. But his Instructor here, instead of replying, diverts himself a while about

† Pag. 8.

Judge Jefferies, * to run off from an Argument which he cannot answer. When his Mergerment is over, He then puts on another Air; an Air of importance.—*I think it an insult upon the British Nation, that any Bishop or Church-Man whatsoever should dare to prescribe Us Laws, or limit our Liberty. A Proceeding like this would have incurr'd an impeachment in former times. Archbishop Laud was brought to the Scaffold, for offences much less injurious to his Country.* † This is threatening language. This Gentleman has forgot himself: He undertook to *instruct* the Bishop, and He does not consider that Threatning is not proper for *Instruction*, tho' it might be for *Correction*. Every Reader may not perceive the true meaning of all this Passion and Bluster; and therefore it is proper I should whisper him a Secret; that this able Reasoner is here perfectly gravelled, and has not one pertinent word to reply to the Bishop's Argument: Such is the force of Truth and Reason, that it's very fiercest opposers are obliged to submit to it, and can only bite the chains, which they cannot get rid of. Who is it now, that *poorly* answers? The Question was; whether Libelling the Founder of our Religion, and Blasphem-

ing his Miracles, are any part of the Liberties of a Christian Nation? The Law is the Rule and the Boundary of the Subjects Liberty; and the Law has absolutely precluded all such profane Licentiousness. The Bishop speaks with the Law, and this Gentleman threatens Him with *Ax* and *Scaffold* † against Law. Which is no strange thing in a Man that can defy Heaven, and blaspheme Omnipotence: But yet it comes very oddly from one that is pleading on the side of Mercy, and for the Liberties of Mankind; and who perhaps has already forfeited the protection of the Laws, and owes his Liberty and all that he enjoys to the Lenity of the Government, and to the Gentleness of that very Religion which He insults and blasphemes. He goes on wandering from the Question, because he sees where He is pinched.—*The great Council of the Nation are only qualified to say, what Liberties belong to the Nation.** True, in points undetermined by Law: But in Things which have been long legally fixt and determined, the Great Council of the Nation speaks by the Standing Laws; which are the Measure of the Subjects Liberties, till repealed by the same Authority that gave them.

† Pag. 101

* Pag. 11.

IX.

The Prosecution carried on against Woolston, at the earnest application of particular Prelates shews what Spirit they are of. * As to the Prosecution carried on against Mr. *Woolston*, if the poor man be in his Senses, it is certainly right. Those that prosecute Him, no doubt, judge him to be so. And if it be at the application of *particular Prelates*, as this Writer says, † (of which I know nothing) as they also take Him to be in his Senses, they do no more than is their duty to do; acting therein, as I conceive, from a true Christian and Apostolical Spirit, tender of the Interests of our most holy Religion, zealous for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls, watchful against Deceivers and ravening Wolves, that tear the Flock of Christ, and continually walk about, seeking whom they may devour. It is a gross mistake to imagine that Prosecuting Offenders in a Legal way, has any thing at all of an ill Spirit in it; since it is the kindest and best Natured office that can be, when there is a necessity for it. To neglect it, at such times, is to expose the Best men to the Insults and Oppressions of the Worst, and is indeed Ill-nature and Cruelty to the *Publick*, which is the greatest Cruelty a man can be guilty of.

* Pag. 11.

† Ibid.

*They have little Sincerity when they declaim against the Free Use of Irony and Ridicule, in contradistinction to the Liberty of serious Argument, because the Judgment which they solicited and obtained in Westminster-hall is this, viz. **

“ Christianity being part of the Common Law of England, all Attempts to subvert or overthrow Christianity, must be punishable by Common Law, because they tend to overthrow the Common Law.

*So that by this Judgment all Arguments against Christianity, whether serious or ludicrous, are equally attempts to subvert Christianity and consequently to be punished alike by Common Law. † I admit the premises according to the Determination of the Judges, and the Inference also which this Writer draws from them; namely, that Arguments against Christianity, be they serious or ludicrous, are indifferently, (not always in the same degree, or with the same guiltiness) attempts to subvert Christianity, and are consequently to be punished, according to the degree of their Malignity, one as well as the other. I see what Fallacy this Author is aiming at, in *equally, and alike*: I detected*

* Pag. 11.

† Pag. 12.

him before doing the same thing; and so it is enough now to have just mentioned it. As to Irony and Ridicule, they are either good or bad, according as they are properly or improperly employed. When they are used in a right manner, at a right time, and to right purposes, the use of them is good, just as the use of Wine, or Feasts, or any other indifferent things: But when instead of well using them, they are abused or misemployed, to serve the ends of Pride, Passion, Vanity, Immorality, Atheism, &c. Then the use of them is bad.

Those that have particularly condemned the use of Irony and Ridicule in the Cause of Prophaneness, or against Christianity, did not, I presume, intend altogether to acquit even serious Arguments, in the same Cause, from blame: If they did, I must take leave to dissent from them. *Sobrius accersit ad evertendam Rempublicam*, is no commendable Character; such a person, in some circumstances, may be a more dangerous, and a more detestable Man, than a Joker or a Buffoon that aims at the same Thing. But, I suppose, what some ingenious and very worthy persons meant, in speaking more favourably of sober Reasoning, was chiefly with a view to other Controversies, where

where some part of Christianity only, and not the whole is struck at, and where a much greater tenderness may reasonably be allowed than to professed Infidels. Or if they had not that in view, they might not perhaps accurately distinguish between the *General* case, and this *Particular*. A ludicrous way of Writing, generally speaking, betrays a greater Malignity, as shewing that Men are advanced to the *seat* of the *Scorner*. Besides that, in that way, there is less colour or pretence for *Conscience*, which is a plea that the Laws have justly indulged: For however a Man may sometimes, with a tolerable Grace, plead Conscience for a Modest opposition to some things established, yet he can never with any face pretend he is indispensibly obliged to lampoon an Establishment, or to make Ballads upon it. I may add farther, that Childish Levity, Frothiness, and Buffoonery, shew little or nothing of a serious regard to Truth, and therefore least of all deserve any favour or indulgence. To say all in a few words; in many Cases, a ludicrous Manner of opposing received Doctrines, may deserve censure, where a modest and serious Opposition might be excusable. But in some of greater importance, neither serious nor ludicrous ought to be endured: And one of these

these Cases is, when any persons endeavour to to poison the Minds of the people with Atheistical Principles of Irreligion and Infidelity. Be the poison ever so soberly administred, it is poison still, and will do mischief, more or less in any vehicle whatever. But to proceed.

XI.

*Observe, what an Essential Difference there is between the Judgment of the Law, and the Lord Bishop of London: One says, whatever denies the Truth of Christianity, tends to subvert it; while the other maintains, and does verily believe, the more freely it is discussed, the more firmly it will stand. ** The Judgment of the Law and the Judgment of the Bishop may both be very right, and very consistent with each other: For the one speaks of the *Natural* and *General* tendency of a Thing; the other of the *Accidental* effect. I hope, it may be said without offence, that Rebellion often serves *accidentally* to strengthen a Government, while its *Natural* or *General* tendency is destructive of it. For which reason a Rebel, though accidentally serviceable to the Crown, yet deserves to be hanged for rebelling, and He must take it as a Favour if, after He is caught, he escapes the Gallows.

XII.

*It is not the punishment of Buffoonery that men of sense oppose: But they can never approve a Judgment, which if carried into a Precedent, must be a total restraint upon all Religious Inquiries, and all Arguments in general on any Subject, whether pleasant or grave. ** As to his men of sense and their approving or disapproving; it matters not. Their sense, one may be sure, is of a pitch with his own, and we have seen what that is: And as they are parties in this Case, their judgment is corrupt and byassed. But as to his Plea, that all *Religious Inquiries* will be restrained, He should have said *Irreligious*, which is quite the contrary, and alters the whole state of the Argument. For he must not bear us in hand, that Libelling Christ Jesus, flouting his Miracles, running riot against Both Testaments, and poisoning the minds of the People, can come under the soft name of *Religious Inquiries*. Meer Inquiries do not satisfy these Gentlemen, but they deal abroad their instructions, obtruding themselves as Guides, lifting Profelytes, and forming a Sect; which is something more than making Inquiries. However, there is Field large

enough left for *Religious Inquiries* within the bounds of Decency, and without falling foul upon all Revealed religion. But the Fault lies in their Ignorance, or their Ill taste. They know nothing or relish nothing of the many innocent, useful Inquiries, within the compass of Theology, which are agreeable entertainment to Wise men and Scholars, and where there is room enough for a Latitude of Thought. It is a glorious Liberty which we *Englishmen* enjoy, as it stands bounded by Law: And we have Good reason to thank God for it, and to wish it may never be abridged. But He that asks more, weakens our Securities, and endangers what we have, and paves the way for Slavery and Bondage; whether it be Popery, or Prevailing Infidelity, that this Outrage and Licentiousness should at length conclude in, the Tyranny of either would be unsupportable, and our valuable Liberties would expire. As to the Tyranny of *Popery*, it is out of question; and, I think, as little doubt can be made of the other. Do but imagine all Fear of God discarded, Conscience and the Expectation of Future reckoning thrown off, and thereupon every wild Passion let loose; and every lust excited, and what could be further added to
make

make an Hell upon Earth? It is a pretty amusement for these Gentlemen to be drawing Infidel schemes, while they sit secure by the Prevalence of Religion still remaining amongst Us: But if once their Schemes were to prevail, and become general, they would soon find, that they themselves would no longer have liberty, or leisure to sit down to write either in favour of Infidelity or against it.

XIII.

When any of my Lords the Bishops do thus declare against Persecution, whilst they are carrying on Prosecution or when they declare for Liberty, whilst they thus solicit such a general Re-straint all Good Christians are highly concerned and deeply affected, and they have a due sense of that unblemished Integrity, and inviolated Sincerity which ought even to accompany the Episcopal Character. † Grave Banter, and contemptible Grimace! As if this Writer or his Clan knew any thing of Good Christians, or would regard their Sentiments if they did: When their professed design is (if they could effect it) that there should not be one Good Christian, nor so much as a Christian left in

† Pag. 13.

the Kingdom. As to the difference between *Persecution* and *Prosecution*, enough hath been said above, whither I refer the Reader.

XIV.

His Lordship maintains, that Infidels, who hate Superstition must naturally favour the Pope: And that because they declaim against all sort of Superstition therefore they must approve the worst sort, namely the Roman Catholick Religion. † This is Misrepresentation. I am confident, that His Lordship has no suspicion of their favouring, either the Popish, or any Religion. But wiser men than they have been made Dupes of. And it is demonstrable, and has often been demonstrated, that they are really doing their dirty work for the Papists, whether they know it or no. A Nation of Atheists or Infidels never was, never will be: But when they shall have shattered the Fences, and broken down the Barrier, which is the Established church, *Popery* will flow in, like a torrent upon Us. This consequence is very plain, but not altogether so plain as the Being of a God and a Providence, or as the Truth of Chri-

stianity, or of Human liberty, Moral virtue, or a Future reckoning; so that it is very possible that they who are blind in so many other respects, may be here blind also.

XV.

*And as He could not wholly deny his good liking of Persecution, yet to soften that terrifying word, His Lordship will have it to be only nominal in England, while he allows it to be real in the Church of Rome. Thus Fire and Faggot are real Persecution, but Pillory, Fine, and Imprisonment are only nominal. ** This again is malicious perverting the Bishop's sense, and grossly abusing the Reader. His Lordship justly supposes the Legal penalties to be no Persecution, or Persecution falsely so called. The *Preston* Rebels might have called it Persecution when they were punished; and with more colour of Reason, because many of them might act upon *Conscience*, misinformed. But the Teachers of Infidelity are plainly Disturbers of the Publick peace, and have no pretence at all to *Conscience*, in doing it. 'Tis not the gentleness of the Penalty, as being Pillory and Fine, (rather than Fire and Faggot) that makes our Legal penalties in this Case no Persecution:

But it is that the Penalties are just, and that Infidel Teachers are grievous offenders both against Church and State.

XVI.

His Lordship would make Her Majesty's learning to preside in the Debate between His Lordship and Woolston, though the Royal authority is implored to prejudge the controversy, which is an insult to Her High understanding, and a Mockery of her Illustrious person; for He asks that Judgment from her knowledge, which is before hand awarded by her Power. • This Gentleman is mistaken if he imagines that Her Majesty was desired to judge whether Christianity or Infidelity ought to have the preference with Her. That would, indeed, be an insult to Her High understanding, and a Mockery to Her Illustrious person, to suppose that She could have a thought towards Infidelity, or entertain any doubt of the Truths of Christianity. But the Dispute was laid before Her Majesty to apprize Her of the folly, madness, wickedness, and outragiousness of the Insults made upon Religion, that so her Royal wisdom might judge of them, and of the necessity of suppressing them,

XVII.

XVII.

*The Queen must undoubtedly relish his Doctrine very ill, if we consider Her frequent and pious Interpositions, at Foreign courts, in behalf of unhappy Men distressed for their Religious opinions. * Revery and Chicane! What because the Queen has a tenderness for men of True religion, therefore She must have the like for men of No religion! because She supports those that maintain the Christian Faith, therefore She must support those that oppose and overthrow it! because She favours innocent, honest men, therefore She must of course favour evil men and delinquents; which is just as much Sense and as good Logick, as if it were said, because She loves those that love their King and Country, therefore She must of consequence love Traitors or Rebels Is there not as wide a difference as possible in the cases, insomuch that the inference from the premises is the very reverse of what this Writer draws from them. For if we consider her frequent and pious interpositions abroad in behalf of unhappy men there, because they profess the True Christian and Protestant religion, how is it possible She should interpose in behalf of*

* Pag. 16.

Infidels at home, who are destroying that very Religion which these distressed Foreigners maintain? Would not that be pulling down with one hand what She builds up with the other? Insolent affront to Majesty, and unpardonable, if it were not contemptible. I know, the party are perpetually harping upon it, that Christ and his apostles, and our first Reformers, opposed Establishments. They did so, and they had good cause for doing it. They disturbed the peace of the World, but they had an equivalent to offer, and made Us more than sufficient amends for it: Otherwise their attempts had been irregular, and unjustifiable; and they had died Impostors and Rioters, and not Martyrs. But what equivalent do these Gentlemen offer Us for disturbing the peace of the World? Rewards in Heaven? They believe no such thing; or if they do, what Rewards are we to have for Infidelity or Irreligion? Oh but they give us *Truth*. No but it was the Primitive Martyrs, and the Reformers that gave Us *Truth*; else why are they appealed to as examples? If our New Doctors are in the True scheme then the Primitive Martyrs and our Reformers disturbed the peace of the World for no good end, for Error only and Mischief, and for the Deception of Mankind, and are no precedents to follow. Either therefore condemn them
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for causelessly disturbing the World, and then appeal thither for precedents: or if they did well, then these Men, who teach directly contrary, do amiss, and can claim no countenance from their examples.

XVIII.

*Their (the Indians) present condition is a much more eligible State than Conversion on any such terms, for all men had better be Savages than Slaves; and whilst Christianity by the Cruelties of wicked Men is against Liberty and Happiness, it has but a poor recommendation to Favour and Esteem.** On the contrary, it would be to very little purpose to endeavour the Conversion of the *Indians*, if every Apostate Christian shall be suffered to publish scandalous Libels against Christianity, to flout its Founder, to spread lies and slanders of Him and his Miracles, to misrepresent his Doctrine and to throw all the malicious reflections, they can invent upon it, to hinder honest and well meaning Men from looking into it, or from seeing the Truth. Such Conduct, is wicked and immoral, and falls under the Correction of the Magistrate, as much as any other Cheat or Imposture. There can be no True liberty, where such Licentiousness is suffered with Impunity. This is part of the Savageness of

Corrupt Nature, and is a Contradiction to Modesty, Civility, Humanity, and to every other Virtue that can preserve Society and make Mankind happy. Not to mention what has been before hinted, that to seduce men to *Infidelity* is making them Slaves to every Lust, Passion, and Folly imaginable; and what is more, it makes them Tygers and Cannibals to each other, while there is neither fear of God, nor Conscience, nor Future account to restrain them. Where every Man is a Tyrant, or disposed to be so, *Slavery* is inevitable, and the most dreadful Slavery that can be imagined. Yet these are the Men that talk, as they love to talk idly, of the *Liberties* of Mankind.

XIX.

*If every man by Law ought to believe, what necessity have they for Doctors to Convert them? ** We are not talking of Forcing Belief upon any Man, but of repressing Insults and Petulance against the Religion Established; of Correcting their conceitedness and arrogance in not being content to enjoy their Opinions to themselves, but striving to impose their Irreligion, Blasphemy, and Prophaneness upon all Men;

* Pag. 19.

which in reality is persecuting the Establishment, and persecuting the Truth.

Enough has been said in answer to the *Introduction*. There follows a mock Dedication to the Queen, a boyish performance, and thrown in, I suppose, to oblige the Bookseller. What is Argumental in it, has been considered, the other Trash is below notice. All I shall observe of it is, that besides the ludicrous, unmannerly insult upon a venerable Prelate, and Lord of Parliament, there is a Breach of Duty and Decency in making so free with Majesty, in one continued strain of Flam and Banter, which must give great offence to as many as have any Reverence for Crowned Heads. Such Fooling, if not properly animadverted upon, and seasonably suppressed, may arrive to a greater Height, and be attended with very mischievous effects.

There is one Objection, not mentioned in the Book itself, but in the mock Dedication, which upon second Thoughts, I have a mind to take notice of, for the insulting manner wherewith it is urged, and not for its strength, pertinence, or ingenuity. The Author thus words it. * *For, Madam (speaking to Queen) They are so far from Trusting in their Arguments offered for Christianity, that*

* Pag. 5.

even when they offer them, they endeavour effectually to deter all men from answering them; whilst they implore the Civil Magistrate to sheath the Sword of Vengeance in the Heart of Religious Liberty, &c. But let it be considered, if any Man were to write against his Majesty's Title to the Crown (as these Men write against our Blessed Lord's Title to the Messiah-ship) whether it would be thought disturbing His Majesty's Right, or the Arguments by which it is defended, to have the Traitor punished according to his Deserts. Or suppose a Minister of State, or Peer of the Realm, had been traduced by Lies and Slanders, would it argue any Distrust in his Cause or Character, if besides a Written Vindication of Himself and Confutation of the Libel, He should further demand to have the Libeller punished as the Law directs? A Vindication in such Cases may be of Use to undeceive those that have been imposed upon by misreport; but perhaps may neither spread so fast, nor so far as the Calumny had done, or at least will be short of Reparation even for the time present; and as to the time to come, the Libeller if He is impudent and insolent (as undoubtedly He will be, if not awed by Penalties;) may immediately repeat the same Calumnies, or invent New ones; or if he does not, Others may, and probably will, while encouraged
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by the Impunity of the first Libeller. So that though a Vindication be ever so full and satisfactory, it may be farther necessary to punish Offenders, in order to prevent their repeating the Offence, and to deter others from following their Example.

Now to apply this Reasoning to the point in hand; This Gentleman may please to know that the Defenders of Christianity have no distrust at all in their Arguments, or Replies, nor any great Idea of the Adverse Party, either as to their Learning, or their Logick, especially in a Cause so wretched and despicable: Yet He is so far right, that those who prosecute Infidels, do discover a *Distrust*, (for every Punishment is a kind of *Caveat*, and implies Distrust) tho' nothing like to what He vainly imagines; but the meaning of it is, 1. That be their Arguments or Replies ever so full and unanswerable, yet possibly they may not spread fast enough, or far enough, to undo the Mischiefs which Infidels have been doing. 2. That if they could get over that Suspicion, yet they can by no means trust in the Honesty, Good sense, or Modesty of Infidels, who, if they escape with Impunity, will presently renew the same wicked Calumnies, though abundantly before confuted. Arguments

ments are feeble Artillery against Insult: and tho' they want no strength proper to them, yet they will no more stop a Lying tongue, or Scolding pen, than put by a Sword, or turn off a Bullet. 3. They can have no well grounded Assurance as to other persons, but that they, at least, may revive the same Calumnies, or invent greater, if not deterred by some exemplary Severities. 4. They cannot altogether trust to the Ingenuity, Attention, or Impartiality of several Readers, and therefore they think it by no means proper, that Libels against Christianity should be thrown among them, tho' Answers also should be immediately sent after them: For where a Constitution is infirm, the Antidote may be insufficient to expel the Poison. 5. They think, it would be tedious, trifling, and endless, to permit every ignorant impertinent Disputant to pelt Christianity and impose upon Weak readers, only that Wiser, and Good men, who could employ their time better, may be constantly exercised in works so much below them; answering Scurrilities. It would be reasonable in any other parallel case, then be it so in this. If it be reasonable to suffer Men to be assaulted and wounded because Surgeons may heal; or Poison to be administred, because Physicians may cure;

or

or Firebrands to be thrown abroad, because somebody may quench them; then may it be reasonable to permit Infidels to propagate Irreligion, because the pious Clergy may (if perchance they may) stop the effect of it. In all other cases of like Nature, wise Men are used to trust more to early precautions than to after remedies.

I shall conclude with Observing how this Libertine sect, within a very few years, have grown in Assurance, and improved in Confidence. When the Author of the *Grounds*, &c. first published his piece, he was so modest as not to claim Toleration or Indulgence for Himself, or his Followers, directly; He knew it would be a gross affront to our Laws and Constitution, as well as to Common sense; But being an artful Man, He shuffles in his Pleas for Liberty under Mr. *Whiston's* name, in which view they looked tolerable, because there is much more to be said for a Man of Conscience and Integrity, a Mistaken Believer, than for an Infidel; and the Pleas for Liberty in one case are much stronger and more rational than in the other. However, it was not long before the *Literal Scheme* came abroad, which directly and with open face claimed a right to oppose publicly the Legal Establishment, in behalf even of *Infidelity*. The same demand was pursued in some smaller Pamphlets, and
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with a very Unbecoming fierceness and bitterness against the Bishop of *Lichfield*, and Dr. *Rogers*. The latter replied to them in a long Treatise, a very complete and finished performance upon the Subject, which for closeness of Argument, and strength of Reason, as well as purity of Style, is inimitable, and will stand the test. Notwithstanding which, this Writer here carries on the same claim of Liberty, against plain and express Law; and not content with that, threatens Bishops with *Scaffolds* and Judges with the *Bar* of the House, for *Passing* by our Constitution. His words are; *However Terrible, Inferior Tribunals may show themselves, the proudest Man that ever swelled in Scarlet have often kneeled at the Bar of that most August Judicature.* This because the Judges in *Westminster-Hall* determined in favour of Christianity, as above mentioned. These are brisk advances in so short a time, and are sufficient to let us see what Spirit they are of.



F I N I S